

Mughuls

Mughuls ruled India for almost three hundred years in varying capacity, the dynasty was set into motion by Babur of Fergana in 1527 AD followed by his son Humayun and crown remained in direct bloodline till 1857 when the monarchy was abolished by the British East India Company. The dynasty is important from historical perspective as almost all the emperors left behind their autobiographies and one odd exception that of Akbar the Great is overcome by his court historians histories.

Mughuls belong to Turk ethnic group, they were settled in the Central Asia or more precisely Eastern Turkestan which comprised of Samarkand, Bukhara, Fergana, Tashkent, Kashgir cities. They were in area between River Oxus{Amu Darya} and River Jaxarates{Sur Darya}. They are the natives of the Western Hindukush and only Wakhan strip separates them from Chitral , Hunza, Gilgit onwards to River Indus. Mughuls can be classified as one of the Aryan tribes the last one to migrate from the highlands towards the green pastures of Indus Valley. Geography plays key role in the classification and grouping of people and tribes. Language, customs, ritual and above all religion binds them together. Mughuls or eastern Turks embraced Islam in a gradual manner . after the initial battles with Arabs the area remained under their jurisdiction before Genghiz Khan brought the downfall with a revolution in military affairs; the world's first blitzkrieg. Under his reign all Muslim Turks became his subservient and joined his army. Tamerlane's grand father had a convention engraved in iron under which the ruler would always be from the family of Gheniz Kahn and command of army to be with Turks more specifically Tamerlane's family. Great Khan 'Temujin' had divided his empire which at time comprised of China, Central Asia, Middle East, Afghanistan among his three sons. Present day Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, were all part of Chagta Khanate. It is this very khanate which have been affecting the history most, even at present and in recent history the most volatile region in world is this Chagta Khanate.

The whole Chagta Khanate was Muslim by faith following Hanfaai & Malaki sect , which is more liberal in interpretation of Islamic laws for instance almost all Mughul emperors were fond of liquor and even Babur was bi sexual in orientation. Yet they would pray and give alms, keeps fast in the holy month of Ramadan and sacrifice lambs in Zi ul haj month. They were gentlemen in nature, adhering and following a code of warfare based upon the Temujin's Code and that of Prophet Muhammad{pbuh} directives. One of the fundamental aspect of Islamic warfare is deception ' War is nothing but deception' and Timurids followed it by spirit. Assassination was a common method to remove the leader by any means; poison was most favoured method. Battles were fierce and had to be fought with a character; the life of the vanquished depends upon his conduct in the battle he had recently lost. The looser had to put the grass in his mouth to show his surrender. Courtesies were immense, a khan or mirza would greet the equivalent by receiving him almost two miles ahead of his camp. Nine to twenty five were the numbers of the greetings done by touching own thighs in front of khan and then stepping back. Headgear was important and none was seen without it, khans would send the acps as mark of respect and gift to fellow family members. Food was in shape of meat and fruits. Villages established on relatively high ground, in the form of forts having a canals running through it in most of cases or erected close to water source. Revenue was limited but it was there, taxes were imposed on the cities and towns. Pay to soldiers remained centred around the loot. These

Turks were generous , they had the custom of giving away most precious gifts on hearing good news especially birth of their sons from messengers while in battlefield.¹

Amir Taimour alias Tamerlane,1336-1405 AD.

Dynasty traces its bloodline to Amir Tamerlane who was born in Samarkand, he practically destroyed India in 1399 when he invaded it. India at that time was ruled by the Muslim dynasty of slave kings belonging to Ghazna. Tamerlane believed that nine out of ten issues confronting a state can be resolved through deliberations and consultations the tenth issue requires a sword for resolve. Tamerlane's rise to power is phenomenon because he set on his history making course with only 243 men². Tamerlane himself admits that he went through lot of deliberations before undertaking any expedition , notably he would reject any issue which had two prong danger and preferring the one with lone danger. He would only listen to advice which he believed was based upon sincerity; rejecting anything which may cause demoralising of his army. Another key characteristic of his life was his belief and faith in religion, he would consult the Holy Koran before undertaking any important task . He did so when Tughluq Taimour summoned him for expedition to Khorasan.

In a strange twist of fate coupled with the wisdom, real politick, and craftsmanship Tamerlane turned the tables on his would be conqueror. He bribed the invading chiefs to just give him enough time to meet Tughlaq Taimour; he met him and won him over by having the royal charter of kingship of Maraw Ul Nihar in his name. The waiting chiefs revolted against the Tughlaq on learning this . Later Tughluq nullified his earlier charter and appointed his own son Ilyas Baig as the ruler of Marwa Ul Nihar. This is which put Tamerlane on run for another two years. Running from mountains to deserts to valleys. He was soon left with seven followers out of which three did not had the horses thus one night they simply stole the horses and deserted Tamerlane. This was not the end of his troubles because after two days he was attacked by a local robber baron that captured Tamerlane and put him in a dungeon. After two full moon , Tamerlane finally got the opportunity to grab the guard's sword and killed him, he now ran after his captor and got him in one corner like a act. In the end Tamerlane did forgive him in lieu for money and horses. It was in events that occurred after this but related to this phase of Tamerlane's life that he was wounded in one of the skirmish with an arrow in his shoulder and in his feet . Tamerlane at this phase of life aligned himself very closely with the religion. He would pray all night and would often sleep after Fajr prayers. It was on one such occasion taht he was offering the prayers when a troop of soldiers led by his former servant joined him. Tamerlane had the desire and aim to capture his lost kingdom of Marva Ul Nihar.

With the death of Tamerlane {1410AD} the 300 years cycle of violence erupting from Central Asia seems to at its lowest ebb. The present day Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkestan were the theatre around which the cobweb of history was woven, there was no central figure of authority left. Tamerlane had nominated his son as his successor and power and authority remained with the house of Tamerlane. By end 15th Century or third generation ; small valley states emerged which were ruled by the Tamerlane blood line in varying off shoots, intermarriages among them by tradition had ensured that formal courtesies will be adhered irrespective of outcome on battle field. Ladies were especially royal family remained unharmed. Rape and loot was the main attraction of a campaign,

¹ *Darbar I Akbari*, Moulana Muhammad Azad, First edition 1910.p-6.

² *Tuzk-i-Taimouri*, translated from Persian by Syed Abu al Hashim Nadvi {Sange Meel publishers, Lahore, 2012}p,21.

rape was less because the women could easily be turned into a slave girl. Food was scarce but fruit and animals in abundance there by maintaining a healthy balance diet. Horse was the key to success in every aspect of life , military was non existent in the form of a regular army rather a band of followers followed the Tamerlane's successors. In such background, in a small valley of Fergana, which is situated astride Amu Darya. It was narrow and had seven towns with satellite villages mostly on high grounds. Fruit was the main production and life pleasant. On the east Kashgir, on the west Samarkand, in the south Badakshan and in north the wild jungles belonging to Persians formed the boundaries of Fergana. Tamerlane had remarked that it was not enough to keep even half a dozen soldiers on permanent revenue.

Babur of Fergana.

Babur's father Sheikh Omar was the ruler of Fergana and mindful of his area he made many ventures to capture adjoining areas who were ruled by his blood brothers, at one time he had Tashkent under his sovereignty. The art of warfare revolved around creating alliances which naturally meant more manpower , however in lieu Sheikh Omar had to give away many of his territories as payment. This custom remained in vogue for many centuries to come. Sheikh Omar was son of abu Saeed Mirza who was son of Sultan Muhammad Mirza, son of MiranShah { the famous town of MiranShah in North Waziristan} who was one among many sons of Great Tamerlane³.

Humayun 1508-1556.

Humayun almost had a copycat life of his father Babur and that of Tamerlane. He lost his inherited, newly established kingdom in India to his half brother Kamran and military commander Pathan Sher Shah Suri who as a military governor revolted and Humayun had to conduct a retrograde operation which practically pushed him back into the south western desert of Indus in Sind. Humayun had only Delhi with him where as Kamran had revolted with Kabul and Lahore behind him, Sher Shah Suri was moving westward from Bengal in the east. Sandwiched between these two , Humayun squeezed out towards the south; the ancient Pattala of Alexander. Almost hundred miles east of River Indus is the ancient mud fort oasis of Umardot. It was here that his son Akbar was born, a small cemented plaque between the Chhor army airstrip and the bazaar of Umardot marks the spot where Akbar was born. Humayun was so penniless at the moment that he was unable even to celebrate the birth of his son.

Humayun crossed Indus and marched through the desert of death with his seventy odd followers including his newly born son and his beloved wife. The same very route was adopted by the British troops during the First Anglo Afghan War of 1839 with disastrous results; monuments still mark the graves of many who died while marching through this waterless , barren, hot, dry piece of land. Humayun was able to make it to Sibi almost two hundred miles west. Crossed Bolan Pass and

³ Tuzk I Babri, Emperor Babur's autobiography, translated from Persian into urdu. Sange Meel publications 1985.

following the present day route reached Kandahar. It is an epic escape, a classic by any standard; hats off to the ladies for withstanding all this torment. There was no army in hunt for Humayun but he was not welcomed by any, his half brother was in control of Kabul with Kandahar also in the orbit. Persian also had their influence stretching to present day Herat and Kandahar. It is worth highlighting that Humayun had a torrent love affair with his wife and seldom both were seen separate but now the turn of after took them to the Kandahar .Humayun finally agreed to the advice of Bairam Khan his former military commander and close , loyal adviser to seek asylum in Persia and wait for the best. Humayun had the option of riding back to his father's home valley and seek help from his relatives. In the end Akbar was left alone with the servants and his parents set off towards Iran. The other side of history is that Akbar was left as hostage with the half brother and relatives of Humayun.

Humayun later came to India via Afghanistan , he captured Kabul in 956Hijra and

Akbar The Great 1542-1605.